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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE DAMAN PROGRAM AND WHAT COMES AFTER

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DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE USG OR FOR INTERNET POSTING.

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Jordan's long-running DAMAN pre-inspection program is set to expire September 2007. According to the head of the Jordan Institute of Standards and Metrology (JISM), DAMAN's contractor will have built or upgraded by the end of the program four labs to test the safety of four categories of products. Although the DAMAN program is ending, JISM's reliance on a twinning program with Germany and the emphasis on European standards raises potential red flags for U.S. exporters for the post-DAMAN period. JISM says the government will issue a law which will adopt the European standards in the form of regulations but with a flexibility that allows other technical regulations to also be adopted. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Yasin Khayat, the head of JISM, told Commercial and Economic Counselors on November 6 that the Bureau Veritas (BV) contract for the DAMAN program would expire September 1, 2007. Khayat said the end of the contract had already been announced, and that the program would not be renewed, either with BV or any other company. BV has constructed and/or equipped three testing labs (for vehicles, electronics and toys), and will complete a fourth for safety and protective equipment before the end of the contract. These labs will be privately owned and independent of the government, but will be accredited for testing by the government. The labs will test product samples on a random basis only after visual inspection has detected a problem.

¶3. (SBU) According to Khayat, JISM's twinning project with Germany is aimed at upgrading its technical and administrative capabilities, and is currently reviewing EU directives on accreditation, standards, market surveillance and metrology. There are four to six German experts working in JISM on the project at any one time. Once the project is completed in October 2007, JISM "would adopt the EU standards." The GoJ would then issue a law designed to adopt the standards in the form of regulations. Khayat, however, asserted that a lot of harmonization would be needed and that the law would leave room for flexibility so that other technical regulations can be adopted. He asserted that, "No priority will be given to any one set," adding that many of the EU standards were actually based on U.S. ones.

¶4. (SBU) In addition to joining the International Laboratory Accreditation Association (ILAC), JISM is also looking at a partnership arrangement with ISO and the American National Standards Institute. Khayat asserted that U.S. standards would be recognized by JISM as international standards as

well, and that EU standards would not prevent their adoption.

¶5. (SBU) Khayat said the twinning project was focusing on a number of EU directives. These included low-voltage electrical equipment, gas appliances, personal protective equipment, toys, construction materials, general safety products, and measurement instruments. Over 1,300 standards would be adopted related to these areas; and Khayat promised to provide the Embassy with a list of them.

¶6. (SBU) Khayat added that JISM is having a problem with the standards on construction materials. The building code in Jordan is based on the U.S. Association for Testing and Materials Standards (ASTM) system, and the EU standards are very different from the ASTM ones. JISM will be looking to harmonize the EU standards to those of the U.S. building code.

¶7. (SBU) Khayat emphasized again that Jordan will easily be able to adopt standards other than those of the EU. In addition, where the U.S. standard is more strict than those of the EU, those EU standards would be adopted to the U.S. ones through harmonization.

¶8. (SBU) Khayat also clarified that the risk-based system which has been operating over the past year would remain in place. NOTE: This means that companies whose products were defect-free or without any safety issues would continue to enter Jordan without anything more than a visual inspection. END NOTE.

HALE